

It's Personal

GadflyZone's Personal Care Insights Blog
by Ashly Koshy

Skip the Maskne, not the Mask

“The new norm” - a popular phrase this year - has left people working from home, baking sourdough bread, greeting with a bow or an elbow bump, sanitizing, and wearing masks all year long. Joining the bandwagon and popularized in the skincare realm, is the term Maskne. This striking addition to 2020's coronavirus lexicon has forced brands to adapt quickly to changing consumer needs. The urgency of this need rose as images of frontline medics with red, irritated skin filled our newsfeed. Maskne creates a need for caring for and treating acne triggered on facial skin due to continuous usage of face protective masks. Maskne, the skin condition, is not new. It has been prevalent in professions where face



shields are a norm - athletes wearing helmets, medical practitioners wearing surgical masks, law enforcement officers with helmets. The concern is real as is evident from various research done on skin damage among health care workers managing COVID-19 (<https://bit.ly/3llLw7>, <https://bit.ly/35kYrWv>, <https://bit.ly/3pmUnwW>). The ubiquity of this condition in 2020 has brought it to the spotlight. Maskne can be caused due to friction and rubbing from masks that cause micro-tears on the skin thus making the skin irritated and sensitive. Sweat and moist air expired into the mask create the ideal warm and humid environment for microbial growth. Wearing breathable masks can help tackle this issue. Allergic reactions to detergents used to wash the fabric masks

could also contribute to skin irritation. Hence, the area around the nose and mouth requires special dermatological care during this pandemic. The fact that Maskne can crop up for every person who wears face protective masks makes it all the more important and universal.

Some skincare brands have gauged the enormity of this latest need from the market and have gone ahead with launching products for treating Maskne. Others provide tips and promote products that are already there in their portfolio. The Korean skin-care brands Dr. Jart+ and Peach & Lily offer collections of “Maskne essentials” (<https://bit.ly/2TQbecX>, <https://bit.ly/2TTvzXL>). Indie brands Peace Out Skincare and Immunocologie also offer

Mask (<https://bit.ly/3eryabD>), which claims to treat Maskne, uses kaolin to absorb excess sebum and calamine to soothe sensitized skin. Other soothing ingredients such as aloe, chamomile, and calendula will also be in demand.

In the cleansers category, deep cleansers, moisturizing cleansers, gentle cleansers, and cleansers for acne-prone skin (e.g. with salicylic acid) are gaining popularity. A rise in the K-beauty trend double cleansing, where an oil-based cleanser is used followed by a water-based cleanser, can also be expected. Double cleansing enables gentle, but deep cleansing.

Consumers can also totally revamp their skincare regimen. They can adopt acne care or sensitive skincare regimen complete with sheet masks and other treatments or can indulge in Maskne essential kits as promoted by various brands. Gentle, soothing, fragrance-free, non-comedogenic, and for sensitive skin are some of the claims consumers would be looking out for. Since comfort is of utmost importance during this time, consumers would tend to use fewer products under a PPE mask - a toner, a moisturizer, and a sunscreen. Slathering on multiple skincare products can clog pores. Hence, multifunctionality and minimalism would see a rise. Moisturizers with SPF benefits are in it for the long haul, as are toners and cleansers with skin “caring” benefits.



Maskne and all the trends associated with it are here to stay for a long while, at least. Some of these trends already exist across various skincare applications. They have the potential to expand further and even cross over to non-topical personal care segments (remember the shea butter-infused diapers?). Analyzing the market disruptive potential of these trends can help skincare and other CPG brands capitalize on them. Ranking these trends based on consumer sentiment and social listening can help create a priority list for brand manufacturers. As always, consumers come first.

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